

Logos, Ethos, and Pathosⁱ

Whenever you read an argument you must ask yourself, "is this persuasive? To whom?" There are several ways to appeal to an audience. Among them are appealing to logos, ethos and pathos. These appeals are prevalent in almost all arguments.

To Appeal to Logic (logos)	To Develop Ethos	To Appeal to Emotion (pathos)
Theoretical, abstract language Denotative meanings/reasons Literal and historical analogies Definitions Factual data and statistics Quotations Citations from experts and authorities	Language appropriate to audience and subject Restrained, sincere, fair minded presentation Appropriate level of vocabulary Correct grammar	Vivid, concrete language Emotionally loaded language Connotative meanings Emotional examples Vivid descriptions Narratives of emotional events Emotional tone Figurative language
	Effect	
Evokes a cognitive, rationale response	Demonstrates author's reliability, competence, and respect for the audience's ideas and values through reliable and appropriate use of support and general accuracy	Evokes an emotional response

Definitions

Logos: The Greek word *logos* is the basis for the English word logic. Logos is a broader idea than formal logic--the highly symbolic and mathematical logic that you might study in a philosophy course. Logos refers to any attempt to appeal to the intellect, the general meaning of "logical argument." Everyday arguments rely heavily on ethos and pathos, but academic arguments rely more on logos. Yes, these arguments will call upon the writers' credibility and try to touch the audience's emotions, but there will more often than not be logical chains of reasoning supporting all claims.

Ethos: Ethos is related to the English word ethics and refers to the trustworthiness of the speaker/writer. Ethos is an effective persuasive strategy because when we believe that the speaker does not intend to do us harm, we are more willing to listen to what s/he has to say. For example, when a trusted doctor gives you advice, you may not understand all of the medical reasoning behind the advice, but you nonetheless follow the directions because you believe that the doctor knows what s/he is talking about. Likewise, when a judge comments on legal precedent audiences tend to listen because it is the job of a judge to know the nature of past legal cases.

Pathos: Pathos is related to the words pathetic, sympathy and empathy. Whenever you accept a claim based on how it makes you feel without fully analyzing the rationale behind the claim, you are acting on pathos. They may be any emotions: love, fear, patriotism, guilt, hate or joy. A majority of arguments in the popular press are heavily dependent on pathetic appeals. The more people react without full consideration for the WHY, the more effective an argument can be. Although the pathetic appeal can be manipulative, it is the cornerstone of moving people to action. Many arguments are able to persuade people logically, but the apathetic audience may not follow through on the call to action. Appeals to pathos touch a nerve and compel people to not only listen, but to also take the next step and act in the world.

ⁱ Courtesy of <http://www.public.asu.edu/~macalla/logosethospathos.html>